

## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 212 070

EA 014 345

AUTHOR Shaumleffel, Virginia  
TITLE North Bend: Portrait of a Districtwide Reading Program.  
INSTITUTION Oregon School Study Council, Eugene.  
PUB DATE Oct 81  
NOTE 35p.  
AVAILABLE FROM Oregon School Study Council, College of Education, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403 (\$4.00, \$3.00 prepaid; quantity discounts).  
JOURNAL CIT OSSC Bulletin; v25 n2, October 1981  
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.  
DESCRIPTORS \*Basal Reading; Elementary Secondary Education; Individual Instruction; Library Services; Networks; \*Reading Material Selection; \*Reading Programs; Remedial Reading; School Districts; State Standards; Teacher Participation  
IDENTIFIERS \*North Bend School District OR; Right to Read

## ABSTRACT

In describing the K-12 reading program in the North Bend (Oregon) School District, this report presents a brief history of the program, discusses key aspects, and lists the program's standards. The program history covers its start in 1974, the effect of an earlier Right to Read campaign, and the district's adoption of the Macmillan basal reading series. The author emphasizes three aspects: the use of a basal series districtwide, to ensure consistency and continuity; the encouragement of teacher involvement through a reading monitoring committee; and the priority assigned to reading by all administrators and teachers. She notes that the program meets Oregon state standards requiring that a program have a philosophy and objectives, a K-12 skill sequence, assessment procedures, prescriptive teaching materials, and program improvement methods. The program uses the basal series throughout elementary and junior high school grades, according to the author, and then provides individualized remedial instruction at the secondary level. Three unique components of the program, the author points out, include the reading monitoring committee and its role in decision-making, a communications network that reaches the community and the staff, and a districtwide library reading program. (RW)

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made \*  
\* from the original document. \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

# OSSC BULLETIN

## NORTH BEND: PORTRAIT OF A DISTRICTWIDE READING PROGRAM

ED212070

By  
Virginia Shaumleffel

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION  
CENTER (ERIC)

- ☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- ☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS  
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Vol. 25, No. 2  
October 1981

EA 014 345

Individual copy \$4.00 (\$3.00 if prepaid)  
Discount of 10% for 10 or more copies

## Preface

The furor over "Why Johnny Can't Read" has not died out in Oregon. School districts continue to be dedicated to improving their reading programs so that their students will be able to read.

In this Bulletin, we have chosen to spotlight North Bend School District, one of Oregon's successful reading programs. During the past six years North Bend has adopted a basic basal series and added its own innovations to create a well-organized and effective program that runs from kindergarten through 12th grade.

We feel that North Bend's program can serve as an example for school districts that have also chosen to adopt a basal series as well as districts that have chosen other kinds of reading programs.

Philip K. Piele  
Executive Secretary

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Lee Wicklund, North Bend curriculum director, and Lew Holt, principal at Hillcrest Elementary in North Bend for giving of their time, expertise, and research material so that this Bulletin could be written.

Dorothy Roth, Mary Schwab, and Jane Snoddy, teachers in the North Bend district, also generously shared pertinent information with the author during interviews.

We would also like to thank Ninette Florence, specialist in reading education at the Oregon State Department of Education, for recommending several Oregon districts where the reading program is strong and for sending materials that served as useful background information.

A special thanks goes to Chuck Lewis, an OSSC graduate research assistant, for the time and effort spent taking notes, making telephone interviews, and writing up background research.

# Contents

|                                               |    |
|-----------------------------------------------|----|
| Preface                                       |    |
| Acknowledgements                              |    |
| Introduction                                  | 1  |
| History of the Program                        | 2  |
| Three Important Decisions                     | 7  |
| -Adoption of the Districtwide Basal Series    | 7  |
| -Teacher Involvement                          | 8  |
| -The Priority of Reading                      | 10 |
| Standards and Requirements                    | 12 |
| -Conformity of Macmillan Program to Standards | 12 |
| Individualization at the Secondary Level      | 18 |
| Three Unique Components                       | 22 |
| -The Reading Monitoring Committee             | 22 |
| -Communications Network                       | 25 |
| -Elementary Library Program                   | 26 |
| Conclusion                                    | 29 |
| Interviews                                    | 30 |

## Introduction

Reading is the single most important competency a child can master. Even today when much of our information comes to us orally over radio and television, the ability to read is indispensable in daily activities. Although motion pictures, television, records, and cassettes feed us large doses of watered-down classics, nothing will ever replace reading the artistically worded originals. To teach a child to read is to give that child a means of cultural survival and a lifetime source of ideas and entertainment.

The many fine reading programs in Oregon attest to the value the state's school districts place on reading. In this year of reading program review and textbook adoption or readoption, many districts are faced with implementing a new program or strengthening an existing one. As an example of how one school district has dealt with the teaching of reading, this Bulletin offers a look at North Bend's reading program. North Bend's program is based on the Macmillan basal reading series, but has several elements that make it unique as well as effective.

It is not the purpose of this Bulletin to promote the selection of the Macmillan series over other basal reading programs. Neither is its purpose to prescribe a specific way to develop a district reading program. Rather its purpose is to present a portrait of a single district where the reading program is a high priority throughout all grade levels and where it is achieving desired results.

## History of the Program

North Bend's reading program has its roots in two district needs: the need to provide a coherent and consistent educational program throughout the district and throughout grades K-12, and the need to improve the district's reading program.

The first step toward consistency was to hire a curriculum director who would coordinate and direct the district's instructional program in all grades and in all subject areas. The need for a curriculum director was linked directly to the district's reading program in a June 1974 Reading Program Evaluation conducted by recognized reading specialists within Oregon. This report recommended a curriculum director to:

- Initiate inservice program

- Obtain college classes on subjects including "How to Teach Reading," "How to Diagnose and Prescribe," "How to Interpret Test Results"

- Coordinate the reading program and systematize the instructional procedures in teaching reading, grades 1-12

- Emphasize the important relationship of reading to the language arts and other subject areas

- Develop an awareness among teachers of their contribution to the total program

- Act as a resource person or consultant to the district staff

- Obtain and disseminate current instructional materials

- Establish a professional library for district staff's use

In fall 1974, the North Bend School District allocated funds for

a curriculum director and hired Lee Wicklund. Wicklund came on duty in May 1975 and immediately began working with the staff to coordinate and systematize North Bend's new reading program.

May 1975 was significant to North Bend's program in a second way because it marked the adoption of the Macmillan series in the district. This adoption of a new basal series was in response to the district's second need: the need to improve its reading program.

North Bend had begun to focus on reading program improvement many years earlier. On May 10, 1971, James Ulum, superintendent of North Bend School District, issued a report of self-study to the North Bend School Board and eventually to the entire staff. This statement defined North Bend's reading philosophy, reading objectives and twenty-two recommendations for program improvement. Some of the recommendations included the adoption of a basal reading series, the development of a progressive sequence of skills and concepts that would follow through the twelve grades, development of a means for material and idea exchange among teachers, and the implementation of special help programs.

In October 1972, Lew Holt, a North Bend elementary school principal who was to become a guiding force behind the new reading program, attended the Oregon Elementary Principals' Conference. There, Ninette Florence, reading consultant from the Oregon State Department of Education and Right to Read, spoke on the importance and scope of the Right to Read movement. She invited principals to represent their school districts

at a six-week Right to Read training program. Holt, who had long been concerned with reading instruction, enrolled in the training program and became a member of the State Advisory Committee to the Department of Education on Right to Read.

In the course of the training program, which took place during the 1972-73 school year, Holt was expected not only to learn about reading theories, but also to apply the Right to Read philosophy to his own district. "I had to sell Right to Read," he explains. Those Oregon school districts that also participated in the movement designed to increase awareness of and support for reading in and out of school know what "selling" Right to Read meant. Book drives, teas, read-a-thons, television and radio interviews, newspaper stories, and Right to Read emblems and stationery were among the many strategies used to make Right to Read a well-known phrase. It was hoped that this campaign would increase enthusiasm for reading among students, teachers, parents, and administrators. In North Bend the movement was successful specifically due to the efforts of teachers and Nellie Ripper, elementary librarian. According to Holt, the effects of the publicity didn't fully reach students until two or three years after his attendance at the training program, but eventually students felt the effects of the movement's enthusiasm. Students identified and sought out Right to Read books and, more importantly, received the benefits of more reading-conscious teachers and administration.

Out of this atmosphere of enthusiasm and out of the district's determination to improve its reading program came the impetus to adopt a basal reading series that would meet the district's needs. Holt went to Urum in February 1975 and asked permission to set up a textbook fair and tea in May. Urum whole-heartedly agreed. Holt contacted reading textbook sales representatives to ask them to attend the fair. Then, prior to the fair, he and a committee of thirty-six teachers previewed every series then on the State Adoption list.

The large committee of teachers was the beginning of the strong emphasis on teacher involvement in the new program. Holt says of the committee, "Typically you have committees of ten or twelve (teachers), but for some reason, maybe because I'd been involved in Right to Read, I was excited and I anticipated something big in terms of reading." The committee was made up of one teacher from nearly every grade level in all seven elementary schools in the district. They met with sales representatives and evaluated the series using evaluation material provided by the State Department. After the textbook fair was held on May 21, 1975, the committee recommended that North Bend adopt the Macmillan series.

The textbook fair brought together the two parts of the effort that was to make the North Bend program successful. The new curriculum director, Lee Wicklund, attended the textbook fair as one of his first duties. He encouraged Lew Holt and the committee of teachers to begin

implementing the newly chosen Macmillan series. Several years of ground work lay behind the program. During the next five years the district staff would concentrate on making the program work for themselves and especially for their students.

## Three Important Decisions

Before a school district can successfully adopt and implement a new program it must articulate a philosophy that will guide the program toward attaining district goals. As reported above, Superintendent Ulum had in 1971 already issued a statement of North Bend's overall reading philosophy and goals. This statement called for district emphasis on "the importance of the teaching of reading--both remedial and developmental--in order that our students may have the best opportunity to lead successful lives." It called for concentration on the initial decoding process with skills and concepts. Additionally, it emphasized providing "experiences which give the printed word meaning so that the pupil feels a joy from words--the thrill of a story, the learning of a fact."

### Adoption of the Districtwide Basal Series

With this comprehensive set of goals and philosophies, the district then continued to decide on a more narrow course of action. One of the first decisions made concerned the type of reading program to be used in the district. Until the Macmillan series was adopted, reading teachers used a variety of textbooks and methods. Dorothy Roth, coordinator of the high school reading program, describes the situation as "everybody had their own thing. Everyone had their own method. Some taught out of old Ginn books and others out of Scott Foresman." The reading committee, including Lew Holt and later Lee Wicklund, had

to decide whether to continue a multiple text approach and strengthen it, to change to a program that allowed staff to develop a program without textbooks, or to adopt, districtwide, a basal series.

The committee chose to adopt a districtwide basal series for two principal reasons. First of all, the districtwide adoption would ensure continuity for the student. As children passed from grade to grade, they would already be familiar with the series format and vocabulary. Since Macmillan is a series that builds on skills learned in previous grades, teachers could depend more on students having prerequisite skills. As Holt says, "For example, a first grader would have a common experience throughout the district."

Second, a districtwide series would develop consistency with the district. Every teacher would be teaching from the same books so that common difficulties and successes could be shared. Inservice training that had meaning for all reading teachers could be planned. Consistency and continuity pulled the district's program together and gave all teachers and administrators common material with which to work toward common goals.

#### Teacher Involvement

Another philosophical decision led to the creation of the reading monitoring committee. The committee--made up of approximately twenty-two teacher representatives from all buildings in the district, including some of the teachers who were on the original textbook

adoption committee in 1975--serves as a strategic bridge between teachers who actually use the Macmillan materials and administrators who ultimately formalize policy concerning the reading program. A more detailed description of this committee follows in this paper; here the three philosophical reasons behind the formation of the committee are outlined.

First, the committee establishes broad ownership of the program among teachers. Teachers on the committee listen to one another and seek solutions for difficulties that arise about the series. Holt says, "Teachers themselves are making the rules," and they feel like the program belongs to them. This feeling of broad ownership does much to soothe any possible resentment teachers might feel at having methods and materials dictated to them by the requirements of the district's program.

Second, the committee encourages accessibility to the administration. The committee works closely with administrators and the curriculum director to determine program policies. Thus communication between teachers and administrators is frequent and open. Curriculum Director Wicklund says, "The best ideas (about a program) come from the teachers." Through the reading monitoring committee he is able to hear directly from the teachers about these ideas.

Finally, the committee maintains teacher and district interest in the program on a high level. There is a natural tendency for the excitement of a new program to lessen after the program becomes old and

routine. Holt says, "We wanted to keep the halo effect and not have the third year slump (in interest)." So the reading monitoring committee continues to meet to exchange ideas, to suggest and implement improvements, and to monitor the series' progress.

#### The Priority of Reading

A third philosophical decision really determined the success of the program. The whole district, including school board, principals, teachers, and administrators, made reading instruction a high district priority. The Right to Read movement ended, but the enthusiasm it generated didn't. Read-a-thons, book fairs, inservice sessions for reading, and visiting authors continued to promote reading. The district improved library facilities by adding books, including those recommended by the Macmillan program. The district also began a special summer school program for first, second, and third graders who needed extra help with reading.

The district was willing to spend money on the program, supplying supplementary material and consummable workbooks, and paying for tuition and lunches for teachers who attended reading conferences. Mary Schwab, an elementary Title I teacher and member of the reading monitoring committee, says about the program, "There would have been cheaper ways to go, but instead we bought the softcovers the kids really love and feel more comfortable with."

Schwab also points out that "the program is a success because

the new curriculum director (Lee Wicklund) had reading as a number one priority." The district supports its reading program with encouragement, with monies, and with acceptance for the ideas which come from the entire staff. With concerned principals providing leadership, the basal series became a vital and effective instructional program.

## Standards and Requirements

The core of the North Bend reading program is the Macmillan series. Initially, the series was developed and used for grades K-6. However, in fall 1981, the program has been expanded to include grades 7 and 8.

North Bend chose the Macmillan series very deliberately. The selection committee reviewed the evaluation material provided by the State Department of Education and Right to Read before they looked at textbooks. They went to the minimum standards section of the Oregon Administrative Rules to make sure that the program they were adopting met these standards. Later, after the series was adopted, they continued to evaluate the series to determine whether it still met the standards set by the district and by the state.

### Conformity of Macmillan Program to Standards

In a 1976 letter to the staff, Lew Holt discussed the ways that the Macmillan program met the requirements of the minimum standards as well as contained all the components of a good reading program as delineated in a 1976 EDU-GRAM. Both the minimum standards and the EDU-GRAM called for the program to have:

- a philosophy, goals, and objectives
- a sequence of skills, K-12, and a procedure for determining student progress
- assessment and diagnostic procedures
- prescriptive teaching

#### program improvement procedures

In his letter, Holt compared the Macmillan program point by point with the above requirements. Of the first requirement he wrote, "The philosophy, goals and objectives of the Macmillan Series were not written specifically for North Bend, but they are in keeping with the philosophies of most teachers as was communicated through the textbook selection process." An example of an objective shared by North Bend and Macmillan is the desire to emphasize reading for enjoyment as well as reading for skill. Superintendent Ulum's statement about pupils experiencing "a joy from words--the thrill of a story" finds its counterpart in Macmillan's statement that "the program is geared to developing independent readers who choose to read. Visually stimulating selections and interesting topics encourage the children to read."

The second requirement, a sequence of skills and a procedure for determining progress, is also met to North Bend's satisfaction by the Macmillan series. Macmillan's program provides thirty-six levels that are used in grades K-6 and an additional twelve levels in grades 7 and 8. The large number of texts lends flexibility for reading-level exchange among students within the same grade level. Although the more advanced of these forty-eight books are used at the senior high, the program was designed to end at grade 8. Holt wrote in his letter, "The one (program) we chose has a sequence of only K-8. This challenges our school district to develop and incorporate a continuous progress program which would run from K-12." The district has developed a high

school program that will be discussed later in this paper.

Macmillan provides a fine management system. In the fall of 1975, Hugh Schoephoerster, then Minnesota's Right to Read director, gave a keynote address at an inservice session for all North Bend teachers. In his address, which Holt taped, later transcribed, and discussed with his staff in a letter, Schoephoerster outlined three functions of a management system in instruction. One function, he said, is "to make it possible for the monitors of instruction to know whether the things that are being taught are being learned." A second function is "to make it possible for the monitors of instruction to know whether individual instructors have arbitrarily or capriciously left things out of the curriculum." The third function of a management system is "to make it possible for the child's next teacher to know exactly how far that youngster had progressed with mastery."

The Macmillan program provides a means for accomplishing all three functions. This record system, formerly called a Key Sort Card, is, as of fall 1981, called a Management Record Card. Upon entering the North Bend School District, usually as a first grader, each elementary student is issued a Management Record Card that is kept by that student's reading teacher. The card has columns of skills grouped according to the textbook in which they are found. As the student masters a certain skill a plus (+) is entered in a box to the right of the skill. If a student fails to master a skill, a minus (-) is recorded. At the end of a school year the card is

placed in the student's cumulative file so that the next year's teacher can determine which skills are mastered, which are weak, and which level the student stopped working on when the previous year ended.

The third and fourth requirements are also met by the Macmillan program. The series provides pre- and post-assessment tests that evaluate more immediate skills. It also provides for Periodic Achievement Tests that evaluate skills mastered after longer periods of study and check to see if previously mastered skills are still remembered. These tests are designed to be diagnostic as well as evaluative. Teachers' manuals are an important resource for prescribing materials and techniques to help teach specific skills that are discovered to be not yet mastered.

District program improvement procedures generally have fallen outside the scope of the Macmillan program, though the reading series itself has undergone revision, in some cases at the suggestion of the North Bend teachers. For the most part program improvement has been carried out through inservice training with Macmillan consultants and reading specialists, through attendance at reading conferences, or through individual innovations that are shared with the rest of the staff through the reading monitoring committee or correspondence from the administration.

#### Reliance on Macmillan Series

Basically the North Bend elementary program follows the Macmillan

series until the end of the sixth grade and then continues through junior high school. Elementary teachers are required to use Macmillan materials exclusively for their basal texts. However, supplementary materials from Modern Curriculum Press are provided for extra work in phonics. The use of the library and library books is strongly encouraged by improved facilities. All other material--such as other printed material, teacher created material, and workbooks--is used to teach, review, pace, and enrich beyond the Macmillan series. However, Holt warned his teachers in a 1981 memo that "supplementary material should not be another basal series or be intended to replace the adopted basal reading program. Rather it should be a variety of reading lessons and experiences which give the students a broad base of knowledge to serve as a foundation for reading rather than accelerating through the program too quickly."

To some school districts this requirement to use Macmillan materials almost exclusively may appear rigid. However, Curriculum Director Wicklund made this decision for several valid reasons. First of all, he wanted to increase district consistency. The "old way" of using whichever materials were available or comfortable provided no scope and sequence in the district reading program. Jane Snoddy, sixth-grade teacher at North Bay Elementary, stated, "Everybody was unhappy with the reading program (then). There was no consistency."

Second, Wicklund realized that a new program might discourage some teachers as they began to work with it. He was concerned that teachers

might go back to their old methods and materials, thus undermining the new program. As Mary Schwab explains, "The district realized that you can't get a new program and teach it to its best if you try to do all kinds of new and wild things with it." By strictly adhering to the Macmillan series, the teachers rapidly became familiar with its workings and are now better able to request supplementary materials and create innovations.

## Individualization at the Secondary Level

Although the North Bend reading program has been strongest in the elementary grades, it carries through to grade 12. As of fall 1981, the junior high grades also participate in the Macmillan program. In junior high the reading program further concentrates on vocabulary and comprehension. The district is also involved with helping senior high students with reading difficulties.

The high school program is under the direction of Dorothy Roth. In fall 1978, the North Bend Language Arts Department required all freshmen, including Honors English, Regular English, and Introduction to English students, to spend at least one period a day for three consecutive weeks in the Reading Satellite Center--a special room where students would work on secondary reading and study skills. The time students spent in the Reading Satellite Center was taken from regular English class time. The purpose behind the program was to give all students an equal opportunity to enrich their reading and studying skills. Those students who required more help could remain in the center.

Individual instructional plans and contracts were designed by evaluating a student's scores on the Stanford Diagnostic Test. Eight major areas of student ability were diagnosed: literal comprehension, inferential comprehension, word meaning, word parts, phonetic analysis, structural analysis, skimming and scanning techniques, and comprehension rate. The individual plan could also cover study skills and permanship if necessary.

This program for freshman students was discontinued in 1980, but the procedures are still used for all high school students who need help in reading. Currently any student who needs extra help with reading is given the Stanford Diagnostic Test and an individualized instructional plan. The emphasis in the high school reading program is on reading in the content area, especially in science, health, world geography, biology, and consumer education. The areas of instruction are:

Content Technical Vocabulary

Content Literal Comprehension

Content Inferential Comprehension

Reading and understanding test questions

Improving the ability to read and understand classroom notes

Improving the ability to read and understand daily assignments

SQ3R (a system for textbook studying; the abbreviation stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review)

The high school program serves all high school students who need help. Special emphasis is placed on reaching freshmen who are reading below their grade level. Dorothy Roth says, "We try to help everybody." Commenting on the program's popularity, she says, "We have more kids wanting to get into the program."

Roth uses Macmillan materials in her reading center along with other materials. She says that students enjoy the Macmillan textbooks. She has discovered that Macmillan workbooks suit well foreign students

who have English for their second language because the words have corresponding pictures on the same page and the students can associate the two.

Roth feels that the elementary program is having a great positive effect on the abilities of high school students. "The number of poor readers has decreased," she points out.

With a well-organized elementary and junior high program and an individualized high school remedial program, North Bend's reading program is getting positive results. Statistically, standardized test scores are up all through the elementary grades. Mary Schwab reports, "Five years ago, 40 percent of our students were at grade level or above. Now 70 percent are at grade level or above and in the fifth and sixth grades 80 percent are above grade level." Wicklund reports that the average student in North Bend is a full year ahead of the national average as shown by the Stanford Achievement Tests.

An extra bonus is that North Bend's program minimizes failure, so students have a better self-image. Lew Holt says, "There are less self-hate problems. Even if they are having trouble with reading, they don't hate themselves because they are not allowed to get so far behind that they are frustrated." Both Mary Schwab and Jane Snoddy commented on the enthusiasm North Bend children have for reading. Part of the reason for this excitement is the Macmillan format. The forty-eight levels allow a student to finish from four to six books a year. The

student can see tangible and relatively quick progress. Another reason for the children's enthusiasm is that the staff's enthusiasm is infectious. There is a knowledge of the importance and value of reading in North Bend.

The North Bend program has some areas that need further attention, but in six years it has done a phenomenal job to make its reading program a success. As Holt says, "The next six years will continue to need the leadership of the principals, the work of the monitoring committee, and the support of teachers, parents, and the school board."

## Three Unique Components

There is nothing unique in adopting a basal reading series. What makes a district program unique are the supporting procedures that have been developed by the school district to meet its own needs. The North Bend program is unique in two areas: the reading monitoring committee and the extensive network of communication within the district.

### The Reading Monitoring Committee

As was reported earlier in this paper the reading monitoring committee was formed for three main reasons: to establish broad ownership of the program, to increase communications between faculty and administration, and to keep interest in the program high. Holt, in a 1979 memo to his staff, stated that "one of its primary purposes is to monitor reading throughout the district and to make suggestions to insure the continuation of a good program." The way the committee monitors the program is by listening to the ideas, praise, and complaints made by other teachers in the district.

The committee's twenty-two members meet about four times a year or whenever a problem arises about the program. During the first two years when the program was getting started the committee met more frequently. This fall, the committee is again meeting frequently because of the additions in the 1981 revised Macmillan reading program. Mary Schwab attributes the success of the committee to the large number of people involved. She says, "The group members are well-rounded in

their views. We have elementary people, people from intermediate grades and high school. There are people who are reading specialists. The wide range of participants makes for broad representation."

The committee has made decisions on everything from how to efficiently hand out materials to pacing of the program. It has heard and dealt with complaints about invalid test questions, problems with instruction manuals, and difficulties in using Management Record Cards. After the committee hears a complaint, members get feedback from their respective schools and from the administration and then together decide on a course of action. Sometimes this procedure has resulted in taking material back to the publisher and having the series revised.

One decision the group made was to cross-grade students at reading time. Since students are at different levels in the 36-level continuum, it seemed advantageous to group students together at the same level regardless of the grade or the class they were in. So at reading time students switch classes, and in some cases grades, to work in their reading groups. This suggestion came from the teachers, was reviewed by the reading monitoring committee, approved by the administration, and made part of the program.

Perhaps one of the most controversial decisions of the committee concerned program pacing and student placement. In September 1975, Lee Wicklund, after conferring with the committee, send a letter to the staff that dealt with the placement of students in the Macmillan program after placement tests were given. He wrote, "Only those students who

score below their grade placement will be placed at a lower level." In other words, those students who scored above their grade level would not be placed at a higher level.

In January 1978, teachers brought to the reading monitoring committee the suggestion that students go into books beyond their grade level if they were able. In February 1978, the reading monitoring committee met to grapple with this problem. Some of the questions committee members considered were: Would expanding require additional groups? additional supplies? What would expanding do for the present teacher? the student? the future teachers? Would expanding help or hinder interdistrict transfers?

The final decision by the committee was to keep students at their grade levels except in exceptional cases. The decision read as follows:

The committee asked for quality instruction of reading-- not quantity. The consensus of opinion was that we use the program and its components and other material to insure mastery learning on the child's instructional level. This may be at his or her grade level or below his or her grade level.

Quantity would be increased vertical progression without accountability or regard for the years that follow. Vertical expansion may satisfy an immediate need of one teacher but then through the ensuing years the problem expands.

Because of these assumptions, the reading monitoring committee recommends quality instruction, planned pacing, and horizontal enrichment rather than rapid vertical expansion.

Horizontal enrichment includes supplementary materials, library work, and extra independent reading and writing projects.

The reading monitoring committee has served the district well. Its involvement has spawned many improvements by recommending changes and by keeping teacher interest high in the use and success of the program.

### Communications Network

Since the reading program is a high priority for the North Bend district, much effort has been expended on keeping all participants informed. The reading monitoring committee serves as a communication vehicle between faculty and administration, but there are other means of communication employed as well.

The community is kept informed through the newspaper. Several articles concerning the Macmillan series, the district's program, and advice to parents about helping their children with reading have appeared in local papers during the past six years. Parents are informed about the program through letters from the district and about their child's progress through letters from the teacher.

Volunteers from the community are encouraged to help with the district's reading program; this involvement enhances public awareness. There have been as many as 400 volunteers in one year hearing students read, working one to one on skills, and working in the library.

The district has maintained close contact with outsiders who could help improve the program. Carl Smith, reading consultant to Macmillan and senior author of the Macmillan reading series; Hugh Schoephoerster, Minnesota Right to Read director; Ann Royer, Cathy Schneider, and Renny Vowell, all Macmillan representatives for Oregon, have spent time at North Bend consulting with teachers and observing classrooms.

Finally, communication in the district is maintained at a high level through the letters and memos of Lee Wicklund and Lew Holt.

Regularly letters come from their offices approving recommendations, praising accomplishments, issuing directions on how to use material best, and generally keeping faculty informed about all phases of the program. This open and frequent communication keeps program visibility high and shows the teachers that the administration cares about the program and the work that the teachers have accomplished.

#### Elementary Library Program

The unique elements of the elementary library program provide additional emphasis on reading in the district. The seven elementary libraries are directed by Nellie Ripper and staffed by library aides. Ripper, who has been with the North Bend district since 1958 and has been head elementary librarian since 1973, meets once a week for one and a half hours with all aides to discuss and coordinate the library program. This maintains consistency throughout the district's elementary libraries.

The elementary program begins with kindergarten students. In addition to library skills, which are taught by Ripper and library aides to grades K-6, the library program concentrates on different themes at three different levels. For kindergarteners and first and second graders, librarians select an author of the month. Teachers read books by the selected author; librarians, teachers, and students collect biographical materials about the author; and in a few cases the author has visited the school.

For the third and fourth graders, the library program concentrates on Newberry Award books and authors. In the fifth and sixth grades, students are introduced to children's classics. In both cases students read recommended books, research authors' biographies, and write reports that concern the chosen book.

Ripper has also devised a color-coding system for the books in the district's elementary libraries. As she admits, the job was tremendous at first, but now every book in all seven libraries is marked on the outside base of its spine with a piece of colored library tape. Four different colors indicate four different levels of reading difficulty. An additional narrow red strip of tape is placed on books that are regarded as "high interest, low vocabulary."

Ripper says that this color-coding system was a breakthrough for elementary teachers. By simply looking at the colors on the backs of the books, teachers can help students pick out books at their reading level. She says teachers can encourage students to read books at a higher level as soon as they feel the students are ready by observing the color marking on the books that the students habitually read.

North Bend elementary libraries also provide North Bend students with a summer library program. Ripper says, "I felt it is a terrible shame to lock up the schools' collections for a quarter of the year." For the past eight years each elementary library has been open one day a week during the summer. Libraries are staffed by Ripper, one library aide, and two youth employment employees.

Each summer a specific topic of interest is chosen. One year the theme was "The Wild West," another year "National Parks." The librarians promote books that concern the topic and present informal lectures and filmstrips. Students from the summer remedial reading program as well as other children write short reports about the topic.

Ripper reports that approximately 700 children, grades K-6, participate in the summer library program. Any student who reads ten books or more during the summer is presented with a reading certificate at an assembly in front of the entire school in the fall. Ripper waits until then to provide schoolwide recognition for reading and readers. She says, "I want other students to see that reading can gain as much recognition as sports or other school activities."

## Conclusion

The North Bend program is successful. Standardized test scores, improved self-concepts, staff and parent enthusiasm, and administration and school board approval all point to success.

Accolades from outside have also come to North Bend. North Bend's Promising Practice Inventory, a description of the improved library program, served as a model in several Oregon and Minnesota school districts and was displayed at a Right to Read conference in Washington, D.C., in April 1976. Several representatives from Oregon school districts have visited North Bend to observe the reading program. Ninette Florence of the Oregon State Department of Education complimented the district on its all-out effort to make the reading program effective.

As is usual with all programs, North Bend has room to grow and improve. However, these past six years have seen remarkable advances in student success in a district where reading is a number one priority.

## Interviews

Florence, Ninette, specialist in reading education, State Department of Education, Oregon. Telephone interview, April 1981.

Holt, Lew, principal, Hillcrest Elementary School, North Bend School District No. 13, Oregon. Interview, May 20, 1981.

Ripper, Nellie, Head elementary librarian, North Bend School District No. 13, Oregon. Telephone interview, September 29, 1981.

Roth, Dorothy, teacher, North Bend Senior High School, North Bend School District No. 13, Oregon. Interview, May 20, 1981.

Schneider, Cathy, Macmillan representative for Oregon. Telephone interview, July 8, 1981.

Schwab, Mary, Title I teacher, North Bay Elementary School, North Bend School District No. 13, Oregon. Interview, May 20, 1981.

Smith, Dr. Carl, consultant on reading for Macmillan Company and professor of education, Indiana University. Telephone interview, July 1, 1981.

Snoddy, Jane, teacher, North Bay Elementary School, North Bend School District No. 13, Oregon. Interview, May 20, 1981.

Wicklund, Dr. Lee A., curriculum director, North Bend School District No. 13, Oregon. Interview, May 20, 1981.